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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001903

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: FIGHTING IN ITURI BREAKS UP A MILITIA CELL

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

1. (C) About half of a 3,000-man strong FARDC detachment, all elements of the First Integrated Brigade, backed by two MONUC attack helicopters and with MONUC logistical assistance, engaged elements of the Revolutionary Congolese Movement (MRC) November 14-16 in the southeast corner of Orientale province near Lake Albert. No MONUC soldiers were killed or injured in the fighting; 3 FARDC soldiers were killed and 15 injured, and 15-20 MRC militia were killed. (Note: The MRC is a coalition of surviving elements of the UPC Bosco and Kakilawe militias which announced its formation several months ago in Kampala, and has been operating extensively in the southeast of Orientale province. MONUC believes this group has been trafficking arms from Rwanda across Lake Albert. End Note.) MONUC estimates that at least 100 MRC militia escaped across Lake Albert by small boat, heading for Rwanda.

2. (C) Comment: This operation is part of an ongoing FARDC/MONUC effort to break the series of MRC cells that have been established in this part of Orientale province. The cells seem to have different but related missions; the MRC cell targeted by this mission, for instance, appears to have been mainly responsible for arms trafficking across Lake Albert, while other cells apparently are responsible for trying to make contact with NALU elements in the northern part of neighboring North Kivu province, and still others attack small villages with the apparent intent of spreading instability and creating significant numbers of internally displaced persons. MONUC believes that this week's operation has, at least temporarily, broken up the MRC cell which had been trafficking arms. If true, this could in turn affect the operational capability of the remaining elements of the MRC.

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